

# 2005 Knox Award Winner

## A/2-17 FA, 2nd ID

**A** Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (A/2-17 FA), Paladin, 2d Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 2nd Infantry Division (2nd ID), Fort Carson, Colorado, is the winner of the 2005 Henry A. Knox Best Active Component (AC) Battery Award. A/2-17 FA's commander is Captain William H. Snook with NCO leader First Sergeant Keith Long.

A/2-17 FA's Soldiers epitomize the professionalism and expertise that perpetuate the Artillery's status as a formidable player on the battlefield. Last year, A Battery deployed and fought in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). In an impressive feat, A Battery Soldiers patrolled the dangerous streets of Ar Ramadi, Iraq, under intense small arms and sniper fire, improvised explosive device IED attacks, car bombs and indirect fires. They provided responsive counterfires and stood guard over Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ramadi, the main FOB for the 2nd BCT.

For the past decade, A Battery has been prepared to conduct combat operations on the Korean peninsula. On 8 September 2004, A Battery assumed control of the areas of Tammin and 5 Kilo, both southwest of Ar Ramadi in Iraq's Al Anbar Province. A Battery joined with 1-9 IN and 44 EN and conducted more than 25 combat missions in these areas. They targeted insurgents and established a presence in the urban areas. The units' commanders remarked on the audacious tenacity with which A Battery took the fight to the insurgents.

The battery also supported 2/5 Marines on many occasions, providing additional combat power and securing key terrain. While executing its combat operations in the Tammin and 5 Kilo areas of Ar Ramadi, A Battery sustained six killed-in-action (KIAs) and five non-return-to-duty wounded-in-action (WIAs). Despite these losses, A Battery persevered and successfully accomplished its non-standard missions.

After completing its patrolling mission, A Battery transitioned to the brigade's counterfire fight on 12 February 2005. Given the size of the area of operations, A Battery was split to conduct decentralized platoon operations. One platoon was

The annual award is named for the first Chief of Field Artillery Major General Henry A. Knox, a Revolutionary War hero, and recognizes an outstanding Active Component (AC) battery based on specific criteria and a narrative of performance. A similar award was established in 1924 but was phased out in 1940 as World War II loomed. The award was reestablished in 2002. (For more information see the link "Knox, Hamilton and Gruber Awards" on the Fort Sill website at <http://sill-www.army.mil/awards/default.htm>.)

located on FOB Ramadi and the other on Camp Habbaniyah (a Coalition base 30 kilometers east of FOB Ramadi) to provide artillery fires throughout the brigade's sector.

Both platoons excelled at counterfire operations, firing 105 missions (88 counterfire missions and 17 close support and illumination missions).

The battery consistently achieved acquisition-to-fire times of between one minute and one and one-half minutes. Its fastest firing time was 42 seconds. The sections honed the crew drill to fire four rounds per howitzer in less than one minute.

The platoons also established and refined firing plans for degraded operations. Each fired the Paladin in a degraded mode and at least one mission completely degraded, using hand-cranks and voice commands and firing off aiming posts.

Tragically, on 16 April, an enemy 122-mm rocket struck Howitzer 13, destroying the howitzer, killing three of its crew and severely injuring the remaining Cannoneer. Yet the battery leadership quickly reconstituted the lost cannon and crew and kept the artillery in the fight with no degradation in counterfire coverage for the brigade.

On 29 May, A

Battery again changed missions and assumed responsibility for base defense operations at FOB Ramadi. A Battery was entrusted with the security of the brigade headquarters and the home of more than 4,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen. Rising to the challenge, A Battery began reconstructing the FOB's perimeter, rebuilt the main gate and enhanced the FOB's security measures, posted critical vigilant observation posts, improved the key weapons systems' positions and applied many other site improvements. This yielded far-reaching effects and led to zero breaches of the FOB's perimeter.

A Battery has conducted itself with dignity and professionalism since redeploying to Fort Carson on 26 July. It has achieved 100 percent accountability of all sensitive items upon redeployment, in spite of the fact it recently had performed diverse missions in two disparate theaters of operations.

A Battery's leaders embraced the challenges of transitioning from combat to a new garrison in Colorado and is in the midst of reorganizing to become an M119A2-equipped unit.

No other artillery battery in the Army has achieved what this battery has during the past year, deploying from its forward base in Korea to tough combat in Iraq and then to its new home at Fort Carson and reorganizing into an M119A2 battery. Through it all, A/2-17 stood tall as a high-performing unit, focused on accomplishing the mission and taking care of its Soldiers.



CPT Snook reenlists PFC Jerrell Barber at FOB Ramadi on 5 July.